

## Golf course links businesses together in construction industry

**JOHNATHAN MONK** – The Ottawa Construction News Staff Writer

FORE!

The 2009 golf season is in full swing in Ontario and with it brings a host of tournaments – some with charitable aspirations and some not.

Whatever the purpose, nowhere is the infamous golf tourney more prevalent than in the construction and building industry.

Each year, thousands of industry people take part in the bevy of friendly competitions across the province.

But no matter who you ask, however, the general consensus on what goes on at these events is unanimous. “These tournaments are not moneymakers,” says Tim Huras, project manager

for Minto Commercial and co-chair of the 2009 AATO (Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario) Golf Tournament. “It’s just networking. With the area that we live in here in Ottawa, networking is a big thing.”

OCA president and general manager John DeVries agrees.

“It’s a good way to attract members,” says DeVries, whose association has two tournaments this season – June 9 and September 15. “It’s a good value and it develops camaraderie among the industry people.”

“It’s outside and you can laugh and have fun while doing a little business on the

side,” adds Huras. “We can package the whole thing up in four-to-six hours, depending, and after that the players can relax. The guys and girls are outside in the sun in a non-competitive environment. With something like a baseball tournament it’s different. There’s an official, rules, disagreements. You just don’t get that here. Yes, there’s a winner but nobody cares. It’s just for fun.”

In Orillia, the ODCA’s (Orillia and District Construction Association) president Shawn Nugent says the most people you could gather together for a baseball tournament would be about 18. “We get the largest amount of people involved with golf,” says Nugent, whose ODCA tourney

has a 1:00 p.m. shotgun start at Horseshoe Valley this summer. “There’s a lot of construction guys that like it. It’s a very popular thing.”

“I don’t know how much business actually gets done,” says Doran Contractors’ project coordinator Rhonda Pritchard with a laugh. “They talk business, yes, but I think it’s more just talking about projects. Regardless of how you get along with someone, though, it’s a tendering process.”

Pritchard, who also organizes Doran’s annual involvement with the OCA’s curling tournament, is playing in her eighth golf tourney with the company this year.

“We always put in a foursome for the fall and in June. I play, along with three other guys. “That’s the thing,” she says, “you just got to get out there and have fun.”

While there is much fun to be had out on the links, the majority of the events serve an even greater purpose and that’s charity.

This year on July 8, the AATO Ottawa Chapter selected the Roger’s House as the recipient of their annual tournament fundraiser. Roger’s House was built in memory of Roger Neilson – Hockey Hall of Fame



Coach and Member of the Order of Canada. It’s a non-profit organization that enriches the lives of children, youth and their families facing progressive life-limiting illnesses with pediatric palliative care through a full-spectrum of family centered services in a supportive home-like environment.

Last year, The Ronald McDonald House was represented and, along with a 50/50 draw, raised approximately \$3,400 dollars in support of the new Ronald McDonald House addition.

In Orillia, Nugent says the ODCA gets just enough money from the event to cover their costs. “We do a draw that supports the scholarship program we fund by raffling off a Texas Mickey.” Each year, the ODCA donates \$1,000 to

one high school graduate who shows promise coming out of school and into the construction and building trades.

Huras says there are in fact so many golf tournaments in Ottawa that it’s hard to make yours stand out.

“People in the construction business generally get to play about two to four times a year, depending, I guess, on your type of business,” he says. “And this year I decided I want to boost it up, to make it more appealing. Guys and girls want to come here and have a good day with no pressure. If they’re going to pick one tournament to go to, I want it to be ours. I want to make it so people will come back next year.”



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